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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/656,678	09/07/2000	Walter J. Hein	8190-424	1936

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EXAMINER

BAYAT, BRADLEY B

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3621

DATE MAILED: 09/28/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/656,678

Applicant(s)

HEIN ET AL. 

Examiner

Bradley Bayat

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 June 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 5 in the response dated 8 June 2004. Thus, claims 1-17 are again presented for examination on the merits.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 11-14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ferguson, U.S. Patent 6,304,861 B1.

As per the following claims, Ferguson discloses:

1. A method of collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and resolving issues...the method comprising (column 3, line 40 – column 4, line 26):

-receiving at least one of an issue and a comment to the issue over a computer network...(column 5, lines 23-28);

-accessing the electronic media by the committee via a third computer device..., and for the committee to prioritize the action issues (figure 3 and associated text);

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-assigning each action issue by the committee via a third computer device...to have a resolution investigation conducted thereon and sending therewith a set of resolution directions...(figures 3,4 and 5 and associated text);

-receiving a resolution proposal...(figures 5, 8 and 9 and associated text);

-directing implementation of the resolution proposal for each evaluated action issue by the committee...(column 8, lines 39-44).

2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing the rejected issues for at least one of further monitoring and future reference (figures 9-10 and associated text).

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein allowing the committee to send a set of resolution directions...a suggested cost of the implementation of the resolution proposal and criteria for designating the action issues as being resolved (column 9, lines 7-13; figures 12, 13 and associated text).

Claims 5-7, 11-14, 16 and 17 are directed to a system and method of above recited claims and are also rejected under Section 102(e) as per Ferguson.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

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having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4, 8-10, 12, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferguson, in view of Shkolnik, US 2002/0184246 A1.

As per claims 4, 8-10, 12 and 15, Ferguson discloses a collaborative network method and system wherein initially, a user selects a problem to be solved by network users collaborating in decision-making, wherein the issue or problem may be determined by an individual such as a project manager, or by other conventional means, such as a committee. The central server solicits initial proposed solutions from the entire group of network users that will collaborate in decision-making and upon prioritizing, provide a proposal for implementation (see abstract and summary). Ferguson does not explicitly limit such a collaborative approach to one industry. Shkolnik, however, teaches a multidisciplinary collaborative integration system that is applied specifically to aircraft industry. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to augment the general collaborative method and system of Ferguson, by applying the teachings recited in Shkolnik to customize the system to the aircraft industry. Shkolnik discloses the use of such a system to enhance the design, safety and non-safety issues that arise in the aircraft industry by utilizing a monitoring, configuration, quality assurance and project review system as applied to a collaborative discussion capable routine [paragraphs 12-31; figures 1, 6 and associated text].

Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior arts of record in the body of this action for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within

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the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the response, to consider fully the entire references as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior arts or disclosed by the examiner.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

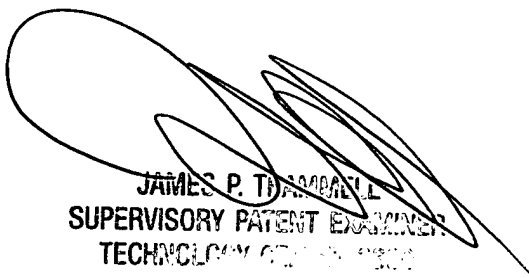
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley Bayat whose telephone number is 703-305-8548. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday during normal business hours.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trammell can be reached on 703-305-9768. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

bbb


JAMES P. THOMPSON
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